

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 OPR-02 SY-05 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 SS-15 PER-01 PM-05 PC-01 EB-08

COME-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00

/065 W

-----119778 170031Z /73

O 162345Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9737

INFO RUTALBAMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI NIACT IMMEDIATE 8615

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4880

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CASC, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: EVACUATION OF CIS PERSONNEL FROM KOLWEZI

REF: KINSHASA 4863

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL, CIS MANAGER ADAMS INFORMED EMBASSY MAY 16 THAT EVACUATION OF CIS EMPLOYEES FROM KOLWEZI BASE WILL TAKE PLACE EARLY MAY 17. LATE MORNING MAY 16 ZAMISH CHIEF INFORMED GENERAL BABIA THAT CIS HAD DECIDED TO MOVE OUT. BABIA CONCURRED IN BROAD OUTLINED OF PROPOSED EVACUATION AND ASKED FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF PLANS WHEN THEY COULD BE COMPLETED.

2. AT ABOUT 1720 ZAMISH CHIEF DELIVERED TO BABIA DOCUMENT STATING CIS INTENTIONS AND REQUESTING FAZ CLEARANCE FOR FIVE AIRCRAFT BASED AT KANANGA TO MOVE BETWEEN KANANGA, MUSONOIE, AND KOLWEZI BETWEEN 0500 AND 1800 ON MAY 17. CLEARANCE ALSO WAS REQUESTED TO MOVE AIRCRAFT IN OPERATIONS ON SUBSEQUENT DAYS AS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE EVACUATION.

3. AT ABOUT 1900 GENERAL BABIA DELIVERED TO ZAMISH CHIEF AN OFFICIAL LETTER DATED 16 MAY, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS:
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QUOTE: THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF YOUR CONTINGENCY PLAN OF 16 MAY 1978 AND DRAWS TO YOUR ATTENTION THAT THE TROOPS OF THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES AT KOLWEZI, TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION WHICH PREVAILS IN THAT CITY, CANNOT FURNISH ESCORTS FOR THE EVACUATION OF FAMILIES AND OF SELECTED EMPLOYEES OF THE BASE IN QUESTION. NEITHER ARE THEY ABLE TO GUARANTEE THE OVER-

FLIGHT OF OPERATIONAL ZONES GIVEN THE FACT THAT OUR SUB-UNITS DO NOT POSSESS SUFFICIENT MEANS OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH OUR ECHELONS IN ORDER TO BE INFORMED WITHIN THE DESIRED TIME OF THE OPERATION WHICH YOU PROPOSE. THAT SITUATION, INADEQUACY OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, YOU HAVE KNOWN ABOUT AS WELL AS WE FOR A LONG TIME.

CONSEQUENTLY, ONLY THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS EVACUATION OPERATION. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE. GENERAL BABIA. UNQUOTE (INFORMATION COPIES OF LETTER WERE SENT TO FOREIGN MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE.)

4. IN SHORT CONVERSATION WITH ZAMISH CHIEF, BABIA SAID THAT CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS AROUND KOLWEZI MADE EVACUATION UNSAFE TOMORROW MORNING AND SAID CIS SHOULD DELAY FURTHER THE PLANNED MOVE. BABIA ADDED THAT CIS WAS FREE TO GO AHEAD IF IT WISHED BUT MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY UNTOWARD RESULTS.

5. DCM, CONSULAR OFFICER, AND REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER MET WITH CIS MANAGER ADAMS AT 2030 AND DELIVERED TO HIM COPY OF BABIA'S LETTER TO CHIEF OF ZAMISH. DCM BRIEFED ADAMS ON SITUATION AS WE UNDERSTOOD IT, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT OUR INTELLIGENCE WAS VERY SKETCHY. EMBOFFS COVERED RANGE OF ARGUMENTS BOTH FOR AND AGAINST WITHDRAWING CIS PERSONNEL. (MANY OF THESE POINTS HAD BEEN COVERED NIGHT BEFORE DURING DISCUSSION OF EVACUATION SCHEDULED FOR MAY 15.) DCM REPEATED EARLIER
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STATEMENTS TO ADAMS THAT WE COULD ONLY PROVIDE FACTS AS WE SAW THEM AND THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION WOULD HAVE TO LIE WITH CIS.

6. ADAMS INFOREMD EMBOFFS THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN MORALE OF CIS PERSONNEL AT KOLWEZI TODAY. IN FACT ABOUT THREE EMPLOYEES HAD EXPRESSED DESIRE TO REMAIN AT CAMP AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT LEAVE WITH GROUP PLANNING TO DEPART MAY 17. ON BALANCE, CIS FELT THAT MAY 17 WOULD BE LESS RISKY THAN MAY 16 HAD PROMISED TO BE. CONSEQUENTLY HIS MIND WAS MADE UP AND EVACUATION WOULD TAKE PLACE AS PLANNED (SEE REFTTEL).

7. ADAMS WELCOMED EMBASSY'S OFFER TO SEND DAO PLANE (WITH CONSULAR OFFICER AND CIS SECURITY OFFICER) TO KANANGA MAY 17 TO AWAIT ARRIVAL OF EVACUEES. HE SAID THERE WOULD BE ADEQUATE NUMBER OF MEDICALLY TRAINED CIS PERSONNEL AND THAT INCLUDING EMBASSY DOCTOR ON FLIGHT SEEMED UNNECESSARY.

8. ADAMS EXPRESSED SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT FAILURE OF BABIA TO MAKE SPECIFICS REFERENE TO FLIGHT CLEARANCE THROUGH KAMINA REGION.

9. ZAMISH CHIEF HAS RETURNED TO FAZ HEADQUARTERS AT 2245 MAY 16 TO

INFORM GOZ THAT CIS INTENDS TO PROCEED WITH EVACUATION MAY 17 AS PLANNED. HE PRESSED FOR ASSURANCES THAT CIS FLIGHTS ARE CLEARED AND THAT FAZ AIR UNITS IN VICINITY WILL BE APPROPRIATELY INSTRUCTED.

10. AT 2315 LOCAL 16 MAY, GENERAL BABIA, IN CHIEF ZAMISH PRESENCE, TELEPHONED AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, READ HIS EVACUATION FLIGHT SCHEDULE AND THEN ASSURED ZAMISH CHIEF THAT FLIGHT CLEARANCES HAD BEEN ARRANGED. BABIA REPEATED HIS MISGIVINGS THAT GROUND FIRE WOULD ENDANGER FLIGHTS.

11. CONTENTS PARAS 9 AND 10 BEING DELIVERED TO CIS KINSHASA. IN ANY EVENT, ADAMS HAS TOLD US THAT OPERATION WILL PROCEED WITH OR WITHOUT CLEARANCE. ADAMS SAID THAT HE RECOGNIZED RISKS AND ACCEPTS FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUTCOME.
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